

Multi-Agency Permitting Teams: Washington State Recognizes Teamwork is a Critical Tool to Joint Delivery of the State's Transportation and Environmental Protection Needs.

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Word Count: 5,879 (including abstract and figures)

Abstract:

Over the past several years, the State of Washington has invested substantial time and energy into strategies that are intended to streamline the environmental regulatory and permit process. The creation of a Multi-Agency Permitting Team (MAP Team) pilot is one such strategic investment. The concept is based on the idea that an interagency team comprised of diverse disciplines, co-located within one office will experience enhanced communication, coordination, and higher quality, more timely permit decisions.

Currently the MAP Team consists of staff members from five governmental agencies: the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Transportation, and King County Department of Development and Environmental Services. Forty-five transportation projects are assigned to the team.

After initially defining how to work together, the team began communications with their customer base in an attempt to make permitting processes more consistent and predictable. The team has been using this feedback to initiate streamlining opportunities to: define complete application(s), create early project coordination and MAP Team permit processes, identify improvement opportunities within each agency, and to create model business practices that will use existing project experiences to deliver future projects. These investments in early project coordination are being tracked through eight performance measures.

The MAP Team pilot sunsets on June 30, 2005, and if successful, Washington State may institute the MAP Team concept as a permanent business practice with the potential for growth in other transportation, intergovernmental and private venture applications.

Introduction

Nationally, transportation improvements and natural resource protection are top priorities for society. Many individuals and organizations treat these two public priorities as if they are mutually exclusive, which only divides them further and keeps them from being addressed efficiently and effectively by government officials.

Government officials enact environmental policies on behalf of society, which are routinely implemented and interpreted by regulatory agencies to aid in their mission of environmental protection. All government agencies, including transportation, have responsibility to improve, maintain, and protect the state's resources. However, even with this shared goal of protecting natural resources, conflicts arise and communication difficulties persist, resulting in added expenses and time.

Policymakers at the highest levels of government recognize the challenges in achieving successful environmental regulations and policies. The western landscape has promoted population growth leading to transportation infrastructure deficiencies (1). These transportation needs have increased due to the age of existing infrastructure. The Western Governors Association states and addresses the problem in this way:

“The regulatory tools we have been relying on over the last quarter of a century are reaching the point of diminishing returns. In addition, environmental issues tend to be highly polarizing, leading to destructive battles that do not necessarily achieve environmental goals. Successful environmental policy implementation is best accomplished through balanced, open, and inclusive approaches at the ground level, where interested stakeholders work together to formulate critical issue statements and develop locally based solutions to those issues.(1)”

Regionally and within Washington State, policy makers are beginning to understand the benefits of a process-driven, ground level approach, versus the traditional top-down, policy-driven approach. This ground level approach can be defined as, people working together in the field so that policies created by management are field-tested during implementation. This approach leads to policy ownership by those responsible for implementation (field personnel) and allows for changes to be made through a feedback loop to the policy makers (management).

Considerable time and effort has been spent on improving the regulatory permitting process within Washington State. Understanding this process is essential in developing any new approach that seeks to improve the current structure.

The subject of this report is a new method being used by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to streamline the environmental permit process for transportation projects. Currently, WSDOT is trying to deliver a large number of projects that are inherently complex in both their engineering designs and environmental impacts. To help meet these workload expectations, WSDOT is looking for partnerships to balance the tradeoffs of protecting environmental resources and permitting these critical projects. This new method focuses on a team approach called the Multi-Agency Permitting Team (MAP Team). The MAP Team is a pilot project, in which regulatory permitting agencies work together with WSDOT to form a partnership. This joint venture seeks to meet the public's expectation that agencies of government should work together in a transparent and accountable process to deliver transportation needs, while protecting the environment. The MAP Team is based on the concept that through enhanced communication and coordination a team of diverse disciplines and regulatory programs can work through many of the complicated issues that delay environmental permits on transportation projects. The team is empowered by their agency management to make critical decisions in a timely manner with the goal of balancing environmental impacts and compensatory mitigation on a selected set of transportation projects. The team includes the following charter agencies:

- Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)
- Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
- Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
- United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps)

Since the MAP Team's inception, November 2003, the team has grown and has added its first local agency member: King County Department of Development and Environmental Services (KC DDES). Other agencies may be added to the team in the future. However, the focus of the MAP Team is on state and federal regulatory permits

and authorizations that are typically acquired for work in aquatic environments, activities related to the protection of water quality, or work in a designated critical area. Permits typically processed through the MAP Team include:

- Clean Water Act - Section 404 Nationwide & Individual Permit (Corps)
- Rivers and Harbors Act - Section 10 Permit (Corps)
- Clean Water Act - Section 401 Certification (Ecology)
- Clean Water Act - Section 402 NPDES Construction Individual Permit (Ecology)
- Costal Zone Management Act - Consistency Determination (Ecology)
- Shoreline Management Act - Review (Ecology)
- Hydraulic Project Approval (WDFW)
- Shoreline Management Act - Permit or Authorization (KC DDES)
- Growth Management Act – Clearing/Critical Areas Permit (KC DDES)
- Planned Agency Utility Exception (KC DDES)

The MAP Team works actively to coordinate early on projects to identify potential problems, but beyond that, the team does not get heavily involved in projects prior to the completion of the National and State Environmental Policy Act(s) (NEPA and SEPA). The MAP Team is a 21-month pilot project that sunsets at the end of the state's budget cycle on June 30, 2005.

Background

The citizens of Washington State expect government agencies to work together on both environmental protection and transportation improvements, both of which are vital to our state's economy and quality of life. However, the coordination and communication to facilitate government agencies to work together can be both time consuming and difficult to manage. This is especially true when it comes to achieving consistent environmental permit requirements associated with multiple federal, state, and local regulatory agencies. Environmentally complex transportation projects typically present many communication and coordination difficulties for WSDOT. Transportation projects, being linear in nature, are unique in the way that they interact with human and natural environments. As a consequence, highway improvement projects typically include relatively small land area acquisitions and impacts along a great linear distance that add up to comparatively large losses to resources and communities when taken as a whole. Further complicating an already complex project development process, the linear nature of these projects typically involves multiple federal, state, and local jurisdictions as these projects weave their way across regulatory boundaries. This unique project characteristic introduces a host of regulations that must be coordinated and addressed through environmental studies, permit requirements, and compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts.

To compound this problem, in recent years Washington State has experienced several challenges for completing transportation projects on time and on budget. These challenges include:

- *Funding and Workload* - Increases in project funding for transportation improvements have multiplied the number of projects that are large, complex, and tied to the state's economic recovery. However, timelines on many projects are now being set by the legislature and their budgets are tied to individual projects. This increases the workload for many WSDOT regions, thereby creating accountability for WSDOT engineers when project schedules are not met. At the same time, lawmakers have been faced with a shrinking state budget and many regulatory agencies have seen a reduction in funding for their already limited personnel and an increase in the need for coordination on transportation projects.
- *Complex Transportation Projects* - Washington State's aging transportation infrastructure and increased population growth have led to the development of large and complex transportation projects. These projects result in complex environmental issues and pass through multiple jurisdictions subjecting them to additional requirements and the potential for conflicts.
- *Communication and Coordination* - It is difficult to get permitting agency personnel, who have many competing needs for their time, in one location on a consistent basis to discuss project impacts and to work together to balance conflicting issues. As a result, most projects end up using a one-on-one communication process when working with various federal, state, and local regulatory agencies. This process is inefficient and can lead to conflicts with other permitting agencies. As it stands, these conflicts can incur deficits of both time and money without contributing to a higher quality transportation or environmental product.

- *Consistency and Predictability* - The inability to predict permit review time periods, permit requirements, and mitigation designs has resulted in a lack of consistent outcomes, unknown project deliverables and consequently, impacts to project schedules.

Purpose

The MAP Team's environment facilitates coordination and cooperation between the charter agencies for efficient and effective permit decisions. These decisions are completed in a timely manner leading to the project's ability to meet its contract advertisement date. Member agencies' challenges with permitting transportation projects are included and addressed through the MAP Team's cooperative goals:

- *Funding and Workload* - Positions in regulatory agencies, were funded directly by WSDOT to address funding constraints and workload issues.
- *Complex Transportation Projects* – Each agency has appointed senior, discipline specific personnel with strong skills to work on complex transportation projects that have been assigned to the MAP Team.
- *Communication and Coordination* –The MAP Team's co-location and their ability to collectively discuss permit issues and share common project permitting goals is expected to enhance interagency communication and coordination. Communication is further enhanced through weekly team and early project meetings. The charter agencies have agreed to identify and solve problems efficiently as possible.
- *Consistency and Predictability* – Predictable timelines and consistent process are accomplished through product development and timeline accountability. Undefined policies are recognized early and are elevated to the correct decision makers to facilitate a permit decision. The team will identify areas for improvement within each agency and develop opportunities to make changes in business practices.

The initial step in creating the team was the interagency coordination for logistical needs, agreement processes, and funding sources between the four charter member agencies.

Logistics

Creating a team and giving them a mandate to work together sounds simple, but in fact is a complex process in itself. WSDOT management decided that WSDOT's Innovative Project Delivery Program (IPD) would manage the MAP Team during its critical start-up period. The IPD is assigned the role of trying new concepts in a controlled environment to determine whether the concept has merit to be used in a broader context or in a specialized way to meet the variety of WSDOT business needs. The first order of work was to develop a MAP Team Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of the team. The Steering Committee was made up of responsible individuals and major stakeholders from each member agency. This committee worked together to: determine the disciplines that would make-up the team, the co-location site, develop contacts for critical business practices, and create the draft agreements allowing for cost sharing and the financial components of the MAP Team to function. The committee also worked through WSDOT to select a manager (a WSDOT employee) who would facilitate the start-up and operations phase of the MAP Team. The MAP Team Project Delivery Manager and the MAP Team Steering Committee began in September of 2003 with the mandate to have the team operational by mid-October.

During the start-up phase, the steering committee met weekly and concentrated on five main areas of business activities. These five areas were intensively managed until after the start-up phase had transitioned into an operational phase. They were:

- *Financial Structure* – Working out the details on the MAP Team agreements included: personnel, equipment, and the co-location site. The initial 21-month budget for these expenditures, including capital costs, totaled approximately 1.5 million dollars.
 - The development of agreements between the agencies required a substantial investment in negotiation and review time.
 - The funding structure for the agreements was problematic because once the state's biannual funding cycle has started it is difficult to secure any additional budget appropriations. The decision was made to fund the program through projects with existing budgets, which were not set-up to fund the MAP Team. Therefore, the twenty-seven initial projects required estimates and approvals for each individual agreement before the program could be operational. Since three agreements were needed for each project, eighty-one project estimates were prepared and contract groups were set-up to accommodate the MAP Team.

- *Personnel* – The Steering Committee members worked within each of their agency personnel offices to either select from existing individuals or to begin the hiring process for new employees. Eight individuals had to be interviewed and hired under project employment in a little less than seven weeks. These individuals represent a broad spectrum of disciplines and areas of expertise:
 - WSDOT provided two full-time positions: a Program Manager and an Environmental Coordinator; who manage the program, funding, and coordinate between the MAP Team and the WSDOT project teams.
 - Ecology provided two and a half full-time positions: a full time Wetland Specialist, a Permit Coordinator, and a half-time Environmental Engineer.
 - WDFW provided two full-time positions: a Habitat Biologist and a Habitat Engineer.
 - Corps provided an existing WSDOT Liaison to work part-time as a Corps Project Manager.
 - KC DDES provided an existing WSDOT Liaison to work part-time as a County Project Manager, and assigned support staff to serve as specific discipline contacts on projects, as necessary.
- *Office Logistics* – Working out the logistics of ordering office supplies, office equipment, computers software, shareware, telecommunications, subcontractors, vehicles and other items had its own set of difficulties, as each agency had different regulations, different contractual requirements, and different preferences.
- *Information Technology (IT)* – The task of coordinating the information technology needs of five separate agencies that all need to talk to their home agencies as well as their teammates was no small feat. However, if the team was going to be successful in this day and age, this item was critical. Coordination on this issue involved getting the IT divisions of each state and federal agency to work out the individual needs of each agency and then to work through the problems that these needs presented to the IT policies and capabilities of each organization. This issue was addressed through an adaptive management process and to some extent, it continues to create issues and solutions today.
- *Project Selection / Workload* – The WSDOT Northwest Region (NWR) volunteered to host the MAP Team pilot project. The WSDOT NWR includes the Seattle metropolitan area - the largest population, most complex transportation infrastructure improvements, and the most complicated environmental challenges in the state. Twenty-seven projects were selected from the hundreds that were assigned to the WSDOT NWR. Since the MAP Team was a pilot project, it was imperative that projects be selected that were capable of being delivered within the twenty-one month period that was designated before the pilot sunsets in June 2005. The project list has grown to forty-five with many more projects pending. These projects include several unique and high profile projects that WSDOT would like to do more of, but require some successful examples to build upon. These selections include projects with: quick delivery needs, large design-build components, model watershed mitigation, and other similar work.

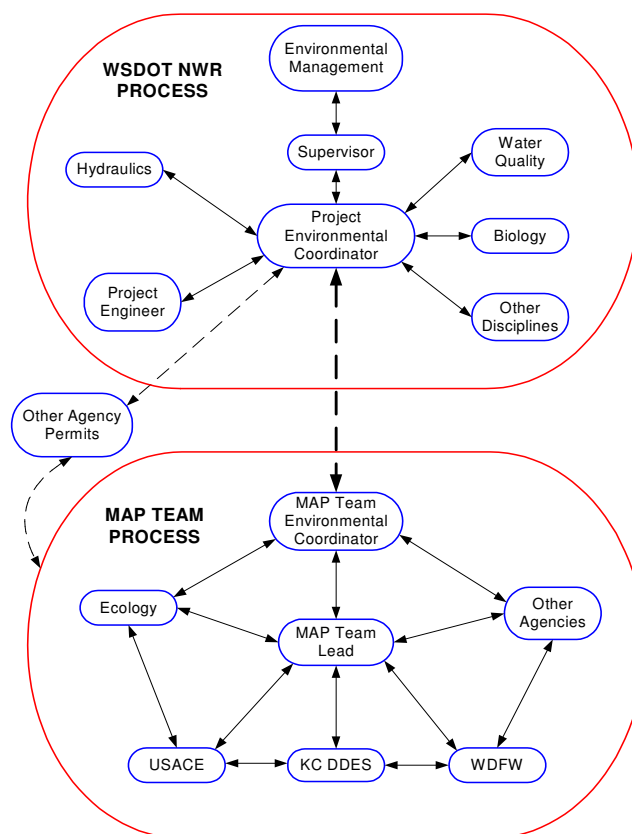
Communication Plan

The intent of the MAP Team's Communication Plan is to provide structure for internal and external communication and coordination. The strong emphasis on communication provides structure for meeting permit needs and deadlines, thereby enabling project schedules to be met. The communication plan structure is as follows:

- *MAP Team members* - Communication is facilitated by providing one central office location for all members, though many retain desks at their own agency as well. The goal is to provide members with both working environments, allowing them to stay interconnected with their individual agency and the MAP Team simultaneously. A weekly meeting is scheduled with all members of the team for the purpose of discussing project status and priorities, technical issues, impacts and mitigation issues, and project risks and opportunities. WSDOT defines risks as any project components that may negatively affect the scope, schedule, or budget of a project, or differ from the normal permitting and environmental mitigation process. Opportunities are defined as positive effects of the scope, schedule or budget of a project, or options that would result in innovative mitigation plans that contribute to positive effects on the environment.
- *WSDOT* - Communication to and from regulatory agencies is funneled through the MAP Team Leader and the MAP Team Environmental Coordinator whose intent is to provide team leadership, obtain information on the project itself, and determine a permit timeline for the MAP Team to meet the project schedule. The project contact is the Project Environmental Coordinator (PEC).
- *Member Agencies* - Each MAP Team member is expected to keep their own agency informed of permit mitigation development and permit issuance. The Steering Committee, created when the MAP Team was established, meets monthly to discuss the progress and problems the MAP Team is experiencing. In addition to

the monthly meeting with the Steering Committee, a quarterly report and presentation is given to the directors of the charter agencies.

FIGURE 1 Communication Model.



WSDOT NWR/ MAP Team Communication Model

In addition to the formal communication plan, tools and processes were developed to provide structure within the team and to WSDOT Project Environmental Coordinators (PEC). These tools and processes include predictable methods, established timelines; and a direct, team-oriented collaborative approach. The MAP Team developed and improved the following process to aid in the issuance of a permit in a timely manner.

1. *Pre-Permit Application Process* - This responsibility for the pre-application process is left largely unchanged, resting with the WSDOT NW Region's PEC. The PEC completes reports for National Environmental Policy Act / State Environmental Policy Act and additional documents relating to federal laws (e.g. National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, etc.). The PEC documents and communicates all environmental aspects of the documentation and analysis process for the project. The PEC then prepares for the MAP Team Early Project Coordination (EPC) Meeting.
2. *Early Project Coordination Meeting* - Although specific disciplines are typically involved with early coordination on environmental documentation and studies, formal involvement with the MAP Team begins here. A meeting is held (in the office and/or field) to cover project design and environmental issues, potential problems, and possible solutions. The project impacts and potential mitigation sites are discussed and baseline conditions are observed in the field.
3. *MAP Team Agencies Submit Permit Responsibility/Expectations* - The MAP Team coordinates an informal letter of response addressing the project's permitting scope, the specific needs for the project captured within a customized Complete Application Checklist, as well as a list of deliverables and durations necessary for the various regulatory agencies to render a permit decision prior to the scheduled project advertisement date. These

deliverables and durations can then be used by the PEC and the design team to prepare the project design and permit application.

4. *WSDOT Submits Permit Application* - The PEC then uses the generated letter (from step 3), in addition to meeting the other requirements to submit their application directly to the MAP Team. The design team tries to set the deliverable durations and the permit preparation time periods to allow for a permit decision approximately 60-90 days prior to the project advertisement date. Sometimes to avoid a delay, projects are added to the team to take advantage of the MAP Team's ability to accommodate quick turnaround times on permits.
5. *Review of Permit Application by MAP Team for Regulatory Consistency* - The initial permit application is submitted to the MAP Team by the PEC, which is then evaluated by the MAP Team for regulatory consistency and a determination of initial completeness. If the initial application is determined to be incomplete to start the permit process, this step may need to be repeated.
6. *Permit Application is Processed by MAP Team* - The formal permit process begins and public notices, if appropriate, are issued. Timely coordination, communication, and receipt of additional information are essential to meet deadlines to deliver permit decisions.
7. *WSDOT Submits Additional Information* - This includes information requested and required within the "MAP Team Complete Application Checklist."
8. *Individual MAP Team Regulatory Agencies Render their Decisions* - The permit decision may be issued or denied by the MAP Team Agencies.

These eight steps improve communication between WSDOT and the regulatory agencies to better achieve permit approval and to clearly define each other's roles and responsibilities within a specified timeline. The communication plan also provides a conflict management process for addressing problems as they arise.

MAP Team Tools

The MAP Team tools include the team charter, communication plan, Early Project Coordination (EPC) meeting/response letter, Complete Application Checklist, Project Status Database, and Performance Measures.

1. *EPC Meeting / Response Letter* - The EPC Meeting, which is the initial meeting normally scheduled in the field with the project PEC, aids the MAP Team in developing the EPC Response Letter. The EPC Response Letter addresses environmental risks and opportunities based on the project scope and the methods that can be used to best reduce environmental impacts, cost, and schedule time periods, as well as identifying higher quality mitigation opportunities. Each regulatory agency provides their feedback jointly within one letter under the MAP Team letterhead. While the letter does not constitute an official agency response, it does capture the agency permitting needs and provides a forum for all agencies to work out risks, opportunities, and conflicts in permit conditions and/or information needs.
2. *Complete Application Checklist* - The MAP Team Complete Application Checklist is a generic document, which is then customized to reflect the individual project requirements for permits/documents and recommended timelines to accommodate a permit decision prior to project ad. (The complete application checklist serves as a supplement to the Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA). The JARPA, used within Washington State, was developed to provide a single application for work within aquatic environments. The regulatory agencies represented within the MAP Team all accept the JARPA with minor modifications.)
3. *Project Status Database* - The Project Status Database is a spreadsheet, which lists each MAP Team project, provides information on the permit application submittal deadline to meet the scheduled advertisement date, when each application was submitted, and indicates the current status of each project. This database provides a document where all parties are accountable for meeting the scheduled advertisement date and where problems occurred.
4. *Performance Measures* - The MAP Team's investment is being tracked through eight performance measures in three categories: time, cost, and changes in business practices. These performance measures are made up of quantitative and qualitative measures, which are continually refined and evaluated for their value and relevance. Three examples are provided below:
 - *Time* - To date, nine projects have been completed by the MAP Team and can be assessed against this objective. Six of the nine projects successfully attained the objective of acquiring permits at least 30-90 days early. Three did not meet the objective; however, for these projects permit work was completed in sufficient time to meet the scheduled contract advertisement date.
 - *Cost* - The cost of the MAP Team has averaged approximately \$46,316 per month, equivalent to \$1,654 a month for each active project during the period of September 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004; and is estimated to

average \$46,750 per month equivalent to \$2,750 a month per active project for the period of July 1, 2004 to September 30, 2004.

- *Changes in Business Practices* - The MAP Team is currently evaluating performance based on formal and informal customer survey techniques. Informal feedback registered to date suggests that the MAP Team has improved interagency communication and coordination, which has led to early conflict identification and prompt conflict resolution.

The MAP Team provides a Quarterly Business Report to the directors of the five participating agencies. This report focuses on the performance of the team, as well as the challenges, successes, and opportunities for improvement that are discovered during the MAP Team operations. The MAP Team Directors Quarterly Report is a good example of a formal feedback loop that demonstrates policy effectiveness and/or the need for change to the management of the agencies that are involved in this pilot.

Each of these tools provide a tangible resource that is accessible to all parties involved, documenting the current status and what needs to be accomplished to meet the scheduled advertisement date. These tools provide a model of business practices for WSDOT to conduct business jointly with the member agencies of the MAP Team.

Conclusion

While the MAP Team at this time cannot claim overwhelming success, the pilot has received early recognition for meeting the program goals and enhancing communications between agencies. The few permits obtained to date have been less contentious, and were obtained in a shorter time than historical averages. These successes have occurred within the MAP Team because of the strong interagency communication feature built into the program.

Successes:

- *Funding and Workload* – Assigning specific projects to the team addresses the workload issues at regulatory agencies by reducing the number and complexity of projects that would be reviewed by their existing constrained resources and focusing their effort on one customer. The MAP Team's funding helped ease the problem of reduction of resources at regulatory agencies. At this time, it is too early to determine whether projects completed vs. dollars spent has been a strategic investment. However, based on the current data and feedback, the MAP Team is a superior process for permitting projects within a reasonable time period.
- *Complex Transportation Projects* – The projects assigned to the MAP Team are of moderate to high complexity. To address this, the MAP Team is made up of senior staff from member agencies, who use communication, coordination, and innovative business practices to meet the program's goals. The team works with WSDOT to address project risks and opportunities in a proactive way so that the project scope, schedule, and budget are not unduly impacted and permit decisions are reached well in advance of project advertisement dates.
- *Communication and Coordination* - Improving communication and coordination between the regulatory agencies and WSDOT was one of the principal reasons for creating and co-locating the MAP Team in the first place. Providing regular opportunities to discuss project issues and technical problems allows for agency endorsement of solutions based on early involvement in the decision making process. The MAP Team places a substantial amount of time and resources into communication and coordination on project technical issues, and education with WSDOT design teams, executive agency management, and the various customers associated with the member agencies.
- *Consistency and Predictability* – Conflicts are inevitable on large complex transportation projects. Therefore, the identification and resolution of conflicts, quickly and effectively, has been a priority of the MAP Team. The creation of tools, processes, and incorporation of new business practices in an interagency forum has improved the MAP Team's ability to define previously difficult to predict procedures. With early project coordination and transparent communication processes in place, agency expectations and accountability are increased. This results in high quality permit decisions that occur within predictable time periods.

Challenges:

While the MAP Team continues to experience challenges, these are not a result from a lack of communication. These challenges result from: project level design decisions being made without concurrence of permitting agencies, differences in professional opinion, emerging policy interpretation surrounding new regulatory legal issues, changing the perception and the components associated with the way that business has been done in the past, and

holding agencies and individuals accountable for commitments that they have made. Each of these is discussed briefly below:

- Project level design decisions evolve, and design decisions are sometimes made after initial permitting information has been submitted to the MAP Team. These decisions are not always communicated to the MAP Team, which is being resolved through discussions between the WSDOT MAP Team leader and individual project offices. The project offices are beginning to realize the impacts of their decisions and this challenge is diminishing.
- Differences in professional opinions are addressed through the MAP Team's communication process, which involves multiple disciplines and viewpoints. Technical sessions including the MAP Team members and WSDOT design teams facilitate a consistent direction, with everyone focused on the particular problem or conflict. The result is to reach a solution that everyone understands and endorses. The intent in placing senior level employees on the MAP Team is to have decision makers at the table so that critical design and regulatory decisions can occur without going through a lengthy elevation process. However, if the conflict persists, then it can be elevated to the supervisor(s) of the MAP Team agency that is involved in the conflict.
- Emerging policy and legal issues are addressed to the extent possible within the MAP Team context. However, issues of this nature are typically addressed at the administrative level of the member agencies, which remains unchanged. However, the MAP Team has mechanisms in place to identify and track these issues through elevation and into resolution.
- The MAP Team uses communication and education processes to identify and make incremental changes in the business practices of member agencies. These incremental changes help to clarify common needs, recurring deliverables, schedule time periods, and the roles and responsibilities of all parties. The MAP Team manager and other members develop written tools and process to document changes that improve business strategies, as well as taking advantage of opportunities to speak to other customer groups about what the MAP Team is doing to gather feedback on the effectiveness of our various approaches.
- The MAP Team members are internally and externally accountable for decisions that they make and timelines agreed to. Information transmitted from the team to others outside the team is consistent, and includes fewer internal and interagency conflicts. Since the MAP Team tracks performance in three areas: Time, Cost, and Changes in Business Practices, WSDOT and the charter agencies are under more scrutiny to complete deliverables such as reports and other data collection. Member agencies also feel increased incentive to review documents and issue an agency response on time so that permit application processes can be completed and decision rendered as quickly as possible.

The MAP Team provides an interagency format, building relationships where fragmentation normally occurs. In the article, "Why Environmental Policy Nightmares Recur (2)" the author, S. Yaffee, advocates interagency management teams to address fragmentation of responsibilities and authorities. According to the author, the reason that problems occur with fragmentation of responsibilities and authorities is, "At minimum, the multiplicity of players with marginal authority and interconnected decision making guarantees that decision making will be slow and generally inconclusive. ... generate piecemeal solutions that might make sense on the agency level, but no sense at the societal level.(2)" The MAP Team is directly addressing these challenges through active on-site communication. This active process creates a win-win situation for the environment and transportation agencies and a balance between economic, environmental, and social needs.

The MAP Team pilot sunsets on June 30, 2005, and if successful, Washington State may institute the MAP Team's concept as a new permanent business practice for transportation projects. Currently the Steering Committee is discussing what the next logical step would be for the development of another MAP Team for transportation projects and where the co-location site would be if the go-ahead is given to develop it. Private industry in Washington State is taking an interest in this new concept of focused government that is both transparent and accountable. The question has been asked that if the MAP Team works for transportation does it have merit and a high enough benefit/cost ratio to apply to other intergovernmental and private venture applications. In the coming months it is possible that the current MAP Team Pilot Project will be able to provide some answers to the question of "Where do we go from here?"

For more information on Washington State's MAP Team for transportation projects visit:
http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/biz/ipd/IPD_MAPT.htm

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the Washington State Department of Transportation, specifically the Innovative Project Delivery Office, which funded and managed the pilot described in this paper. Additional recognition goes out to the collaborative approach by the participating MAP Team agencies: the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Washington State Department of Ecology, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, and King County Department of Development and Environmental Services. The authors would also like to recognize the individuals on the MAP Team who are successfully permitting transportation projects within this new process.

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